

Message Text

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41/11

ACTION EA-10

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RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 AID-05 IGA-01 IO-10

MC-01 ACDA-05 NIC-01 SY-04 /077 W

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O P 261145Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9084

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

CONFIDENTIAL PHNOM PENH 1581

CORRECTED COPY (TEXT)

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS CB

SUBJECT: TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF KC DRY SEASON OFFENSIVE

REF: PHNOM PENH 1537

1. SUMMARY. THE SECOND MEKONG RIVER CONVOY SINCE KC OFFENSIVE STARTED JAN 1 ARRIVED IN PHNOM PENH EARLY JAN 26 EXCEPT FOR ONE OIL TANKER WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO GET HERE JAN 27. ROCKETS CONTINUED TO LAND IN THE CITY AND POCHENTONG. THE KC ARE MAINTAINING THEIR PRESSURE IN THE 7TH DIVISION AREA NORTHWEST OF PHNOM PENH, BUT FANK FORCES AT TWO OTHER POINTS AROUND THE CAPITAL INFILCTED HEAVY LOSSES ON COMMUNIST UNITS. FANK REPORTS, AS YET UNCONFIRMED, DESCRIBE THE SITUATION IN ONE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL AS CRITICAL. END SUMMARY.

2. THE CONVOY ARRIVED IN PHNOM PENH AT ABOUT 0600 JAN 26. IT TOOK HEAVY ATTACKS BY FIRE EN ROUTE BUT ITS PASSAGE WAS SMOOTHER THAN THAT OF ITS PREDECESSOR

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OF JAN 23, THANKS IN LARGE PART TO IMPROVED TACTICS AND

COORDINATION. AIR SUPPORT FOR THE CONVOY WAS EXCELLENT, AND THE KHMER NAVY PERFORMED WELL.

3. ONE OF THE TWO OIL TANKERS IN THE CONVOY TOOK ENEMY FIRE BELOW NEAK LUONG AND PORTIONS OF THE GALLEY AND CREW QUARTERS CAUGHT FIRE. THE TANKER'S CARGO WAS UNDAMAGED AND THE BLAZE WAS PUT UNDER CONTROL. IT WAS DECIDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE TANKER WOULD REMAIN IN NEAK LUONG RATHER THAN PROCEED WITH THE REST OF THE CONVOY. THE TANKER IS EXPECTED TO ARRIVE IN PHNOM PENH JAN 27.

4. UPDATED FIGURES FOR JAN 25 SHOW THAT THE KC FIRED 16 107MM ROCKETS AT THE CITY WOUNDING SOME 34 PERSONS. SIX 81MM MORTARS ALSO LANDED IN PHNOM PENH, WOUNDING FOUR PERSONS. THE KC ALSO FIRED ABOUT 11 ROCKETS AT POCHENTONG LATE JAN 25 AND EARLY JAN 26; DAMAGE OR CASUALTIES, IF ANY, HAVE NOT YET BEEN REPORTED.

5. THE KC CONTINUE TO EXERT PRESSURE ON THE 75H DIVISION AREA ABOUT 10 KILOMETERS NORTHWEST OF PHNOM PENH. THE ROAD LINKING THE DIVISION COMMAND POST WITH ONE OF ITS BRIGADES IS STILL CUT, AND FRIENDLY POSITIONS ARE SUSTAINING GROUND PROBES AND ATTACKS BY FIRE. FANK HAS SENT A BRIGADE TO PROTECT THE OIL DEPOT ON ROUTE 5 IN THE SAME AREA, HOPING TO PUSH THE KC BACK. FOR THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, THE OIL DEPOT IS STILL VULNERABLE TO DIRECT ENEMY FIRE.

6. ELSEWHERE AROUND PHNOM PENH, FANK REPORTS INFlicting HEAVY CASUALTIES ON THE KC NORTH OF ROUTE 4 (MOST OF THESE BY AIR) AND ALONG ROUTE 1 SOUTHEAST OF PHNOM PENH.

7. THE KC REPORTEDLY ARE THREATENING FRIENDLY DEFENSES OF THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL OF KAMPOT IN SOUTHWESTERN CAMBODIA. FANK REPORTS THE SITUATION AS CRITICAL BUT THERE IS NOT YET ENOUGH INFORMATION AVAIABLE TO INDICATE WHETHER THIS EVALUATION IS JUSTIFIED.

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